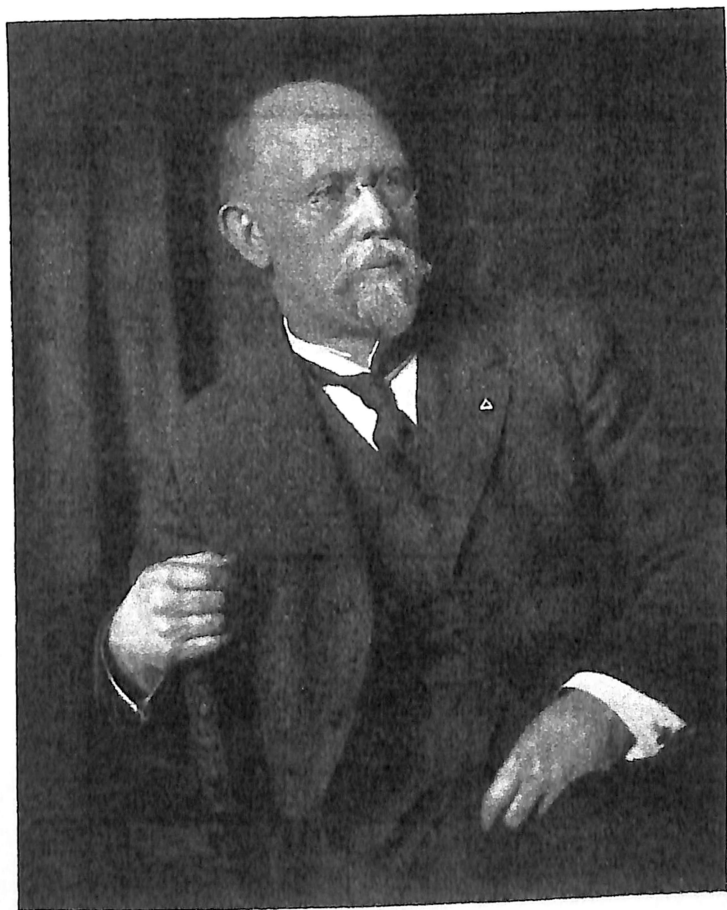


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JOHN FRANCIS MURPHY, N.A.

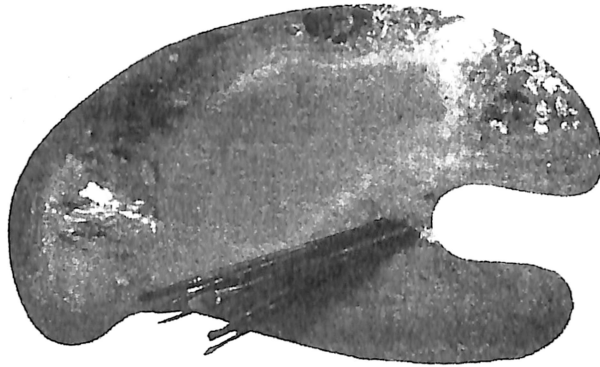
The Salmagundi Club makes grateful
acknowledgment to those who have
generously loaned their paintings for
this Memorial Exhibition.



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AN APPRECIATION

John Francis Murphy

1853—1921

There could be no more fitting place for a Memorial Exhibition of the work of John Francis Murphy than the gallery of the Salmagundi Club that he loved so well, and with which he had been associated for so many years.

Coming to New York a young man in 1875, he soon found in this Club friendly associates and in 1878 he himself became one of its active members. He was an exhibitor at its member shows, especially of notable sketches in black and white, and his work was early recognized as that of a thorough artist and a patient and very sincere student of natural forms. From the first, his manly simplicity and his fine capacity for friendship were manifest, and with these qualities went an

always generous appreciation of the work of others. His early days in art followed no primrose path, but the narrow ways of discouragement and very limited means, and he knew well the hardships that have beset the beginnings of so many great nāmes in art.

Murphy was not of the sort to pose as the neglected genius, however. He met hard conditions with a determination to find himself in his work, and no one worked with more earnestness to lay a foundation of real accomplishment. It is impossible for any one to study his early drawings without realizing that in them he was laying the foundation of the very real knowledge of nature that later was to give to his paintings the element of intrinsic truth based on a complete and sympathetic understanding.

Like Inness and Wyant, he was self-taught and like them, his life was in his work, and like them, too, he has left behind him a sense of great loss and great achievement.

How fine it was that Murphy's fame should have met him more than half way, that honor in his own country was not denied him while he lived, that he should have had the satisfaction of seeing his pictures sold to famous collectors at prices that would have seemed a princely fortune to him in his early days. In the maturity of his life and art he came into his own, and the pictures of no American painter have been more widely sought or more highly valued. Valued not alone for the mere money they represent, but for their exquisite beauty, their lovely color, their poetic and serene revelation of the moods of nature he loved so well.

In the early spring or the late fall, the time of tender musings, of refreshment of awakening, Murphy loved to paint, and in the fall when the old brown earth and the silhouetted trees and the colors of the autumn were golden. His lovely transcripts of these particular seasons were expressions of the man's own sensitive response to the season's moods. They revealed Murphy's heart, his ever fine poetic response to the quieter aspects of nature that he loved to paint and upon which his reputation was established.

How few have ever enveloped a landscape with a finer truth of atmosphere, painted lovelier or more expressive skies, or brought to view a more convincing feeling of the particular scene and time. -

Murphy was a lover of nature as few painters have been. He loved not only the pictorial aspects, but with a true nature-lover's sincerity the ways of trees, of birds, of the little animals that found him a friend in his home among the hills at Arkville.

If he painted in his studio, he carried there with him the visions that only one sees and knows who has gone directly to the sources of inspiration. He was never the facile worker, and as the years went on, he painted fewer pictures, ever striving with all the means in his power and with an increasing command of his medium and his own special technique, to say the things he felt, to declare in a beautiful pattern of pigment the thing that was in his soul.

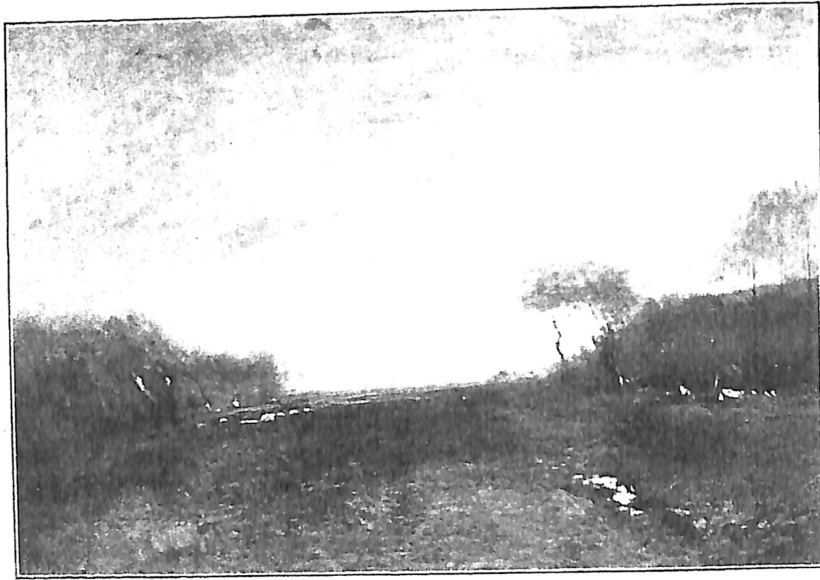
He first exhibited at the National Academy in 1876, the year after his coming to New York; and in 1885 he won the

Second Hallgarten Prize for a characteristic picture called "Tints of a Vanished Past." Two years later he received the Webb Prize. In 1885 he was made an Associate of the National Academy, and two years later an N. A.

It was well said of him recently by a fellow painter that he was "a worker of infinite pains" and was "never afraid of his work." To an artist who was much bothered over the rendering of foliage in a landscape in which he took much pride, Murphy advised: "Make a lot of drawings from Nature with a sharp pencil." This was his own practice, and no one can look at his trees simplified and softened as they may be, with the mist of spring or the haze of autumn, without a consciousness of the fact that beneath the synthetic handling exists a positive knowledge of their anatomy and real aspects.

Murphy was never led away from his own sincerity and purposes by the vagaries of the impressionists or by any of the modernists that have proved so destructive to many of the younger men of today. He knew the thing he loved, and painted it with the inspiration and affection and regard for truth that belong, with rare exceptions, only to men of great talent and individuality combined with great simplicity of character.

Murphy's popularity, the adulation and keen competition for his pictures that might have excused a certain degree of pose and bumptiousness, made no difference in him. He was as ready to greet an old friend whose ways had gone hard, to say the kind and encouraging word to the young



Golden Autumn. By J. Francis Murphy

painter, in the days of his great success, as he was when he wondered where he could sell a few sketches to pay his studio rent.

His influence on American art was a wholesome one, and in his achievement, in the lovely things he cared most to paint, he has given great pleasure to thousands and made thousands realize that with him as with Inness, Wyant, Martin, and Homer, American landscape came into its own as the best in the world. "Murphy went forth with a kindling sense of the magic in the woods and skies, and he carried that magic with such feeling into his work that we owe him a heavy debt."

That he lived to be recognized as a leader in American landscape, to find both the satisfaction and the ease of mind that comes with an adequate financial return for all his labor, was something that everyone who knew him rejoiced in. His was the fine gift of seeing Nature and of making her beauty known to others through his own sympathetic vision, and his was even the greater gift of a generous appreciation of the work of others, of inspiring affection and love in those whose privilege it was to call him friend.

He has taken a place and a notable one among our old masters, in the category that includes Inness, Wyant, Martin, and Homer, and his message will go on as theirs go on—the message of inspiration and truth. His pictures, the treasured possessions of those who have them, will be even more appreciated with the passing years.

Murphy was ever jealous of his own reputation and sincerity, and was never content with any work that did not represent his best endeavor. His was indeed an artistic conscience that never yielded to the too eager demands of the moment. The world could wait while he was doing the one thing he loved best to do, in his own way, in his own time. His reputation stands on solid accomplishment. It grew slowly with the years and late in life he could look back, when at the height of his fame and talk and smile over early hardships with the old spirit of youth and the seriousness that comes from having passed through the trials that test men's souls and prove them.

JAMES B. CARRINGTON.

Catalog

Numbers 1 to 14. Pencil sketches
from 1871 to 1921.

- ✓ 15. First picture painted. Chicago,
1870
- ✓ 16. Study. Old Mill. Arkville,
N. Y.
- ✓ 17. Study. Old House
- ✓ 18. Sketch, Montigny, France
- ✓ 19. Black and White
- ✓ 20. Morning in New Jersey
- ✓ 21. Butter Creek, Vermont
- ✓ 22. In Vermont
- 23. Scene in Vermont
- 24. Afternoon Effect, 1879
- 25. Afterglow
- 26. Black and White
- 27. Golden Autumn
- ✓ 28. Spring Landscape
- ✓ 29. Autumn Days
- ✓ 30. Willows
- ✓ 31. Group of Sycamores
- ✓ 32. The Brook

- ✓ 33. Fall Landscape
- ✓ 34. Summer
- ✓ 35. Early Fall
- ✓ 36. Upland Pasture, Early Morning
- ✓ 37. Tints of a Vanished Past
Second Hallgarten Prize. N.A.D. 1885
- ✓ 38. The Blackberry Lot
- ✓ 39. Autumn Afternoon
- ✓ 40. Grey Morning
- ✓ 41. The Pool
- ✓ 42. On the Marshes
- ✓ 43. The Last Glow
- ✓ 44. Summer Morning
- ✓ 45. After Glow, October
- ✓ 46. Hillside in October
- ✓ 47. Spring
- ✓ 48. Arkville
- ✓ 49. Autumn Afternoon
- ✓ 50. The Sprout Lot
- ✓ 51. The Wide Lane, 1921
- ✓ 52. A Recollection, 1921